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Representative Stevenson speaks on a Resolution he authored honoring the success of the 2005 Northern League Champion Gary SouthShore RailCats Professional Baseball Club. He was joined on the floor of the House by RailCats Vice President & General Manager Roger Wexelberg and RailCats broadcaster Tom Nichols.

Stevenson told of how the Railcats won the Northern League championship in 2005 in just their fourth season of existence, calling it a truly exciting season. He added how Northwest Indiana is proud of their RailCats and congratulated them for an exciting year.

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Representative Dan Stevenson

Working for You



Stevenson Votes NO on Leasing Toll Road



Helping Hoosier Families



Property Tax Relief



2006 Session Report

Additional Property Tax RELIEF

At the start of the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, property tax relief was identified as a priority by members of both parties. When the smoke cleared, we were able to provide some relief for homeowners.

This year, about 1.5 million homeowners will receive a one-time increase in the state homestead credit from 20 to 28 percent. This credit will provide around \$100 million in property tax relief in 2006.



Rep. Stevenson

In 2007, the state homestead deduction will increase from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for one year only. This relief will provide an additional \$127 million in relief for homeowners.

Starting in 2008, the state will gradually phase in a cap on property tax bills at two percent of a home's value. This cap would apply to all classes of property in Indiana, starting in 2010.

In addition, new legislation will allow Lake County residents to take the \$2,500 property tax deduction for 2004 next year on their 2006 income tax returns. This will remedy the negative situation encountered by taxpayers due to the delay in mailing and payment of property tax bills the past few years. Legislators moved this to the 2006 returns since so many county residents already had filed their income taxes.

While this relief is welcome, it still does not make up for the massive increases in local property taxes that were passed on to home and business owners through the biennial state budget approved in 2005 by the Republicans leading our state's government. I voted against that budget because at the time it increased the burden on local property taxpayers to the tune of an estimated \$850 million.

And that means you are still going to see your property taxes go up when you get your next tax bill. The time to have enacted true, lasting property tax relief was 2005, but nothing was done by those in charge.

Major Moves Stevenson votes **NO** on leasing Toll Road

More than anything else, the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly will be remembered for Major Moves, the governor's program to lease the Indiana Toll Road for \$3.8 billion to a foreign group for the next 75 years.

This proposal became law, despite public opposition at a level I have never seen before, including more than 75 percent of the people in our district who answered my survey. In large numbers, the people of Indiana said they did not want a public asset built with their tax dollars handed over to a foreign corporation, which then will pocket all profits generated by the toll road for 75 years. I heard you and voted **AGAINST** the plan, but our concerns were not enough to change the minds of the majorities in control of the Indiana House and Senate.

Now that Major Moves has become law, what will happen in Indiana?

From now until 2081, when you travel the Indiana Toll Road, your tolls will be sent overseas.

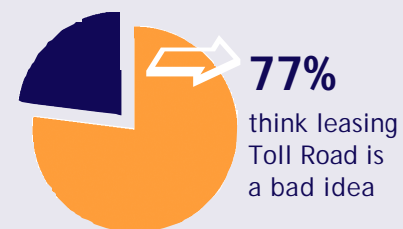
The governor says Indiana will begin work on around 200 road and bridge projects with the \$3.8 billion received from the foreign investors. I believe the lease doesn't provide enough funding to pay for all of the Major Moves projects promised by the governor.

An extension of Interstate 69 from Evansville to Indianapolis will be built, but the completion of that project will be delayed because Marion County lawmakers demanded a new location at the northern end of the extension. No one can say when construction on the I-69 extension will be completed.

When that extension is built, it will be a toll road, likely owned and operated by a foreign company. Thanks to the demands of some Republican Marion County legislators, the I-69 extension will be a toll road from Evansville to Martinsville, but not from Martinsville to Indianapolis.

The implications of Major Moves will be felt in Indiana for years to come. If anything, more time was needed to fully analyze the impact of Major Moves. I fear we will be finding out more and more disturbing details about it as time goes on.

Hoosiers Voice Opposition to Major Moves



Source: 2006 Legislative Survey.

FOR SALE



Indiana tightens eminent domain law

Improving protection for homeowners

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can use the process of eminent domain to take private property, such as homes and businesses, in order to hand it over to a private developer.

Indiana lawmakers immediately began working on a plan to protect the property rights of Hoosiers. Months of bipartisan work has resulted in legislation that tightens Indiana's eminent domain laws and restricts the ability of most government units to seize private property and transfer it to private entities for development.



Rep. Stevenson reviews legislation on the House floor.

vate entities for development.

The new legislation sets strict standards for property acquisition through eminent domain, and limits its use to only truly blighted and decaying properties. This will prevent a developer from being able to have a local government use eminent domain to seize your property simply because they think it might be a good spot for a new strip mall.

It received unanimous support, but there are still potential problems that need to be addressed. Most troublesome is the fact that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is exempt from complying with the new restrictions.

There are concerns that INDOT will use this exemption to seize property for some of the road privatization projects proposed by the governor, such as the Interstate 69 extension or other unannounced projects in other areas of the state including property near the foreign-controlled Indiana Toll Road.

A summary of new legislation



FUNERAL PROTESTS

New legislation increases the penalty for disorderly conduct occurring near the location of a funeral, memorial service, or viewing. The bill is largely in response to a group from Kansas that has chosen to stage protests at the funerals of Hoosier soldiers

killed in action, using the occasion to make a political statement.



SEX OFFENDERS

A series of bills continue our state's efforts to crack down on sex offenders. The bills clarify the designation of "sexually violent predator," require sex offenders to wear GPS tracking devices, establish lifetime parole for

these offenders, ban sex offenders' access to locations where children may be present, keep better track of sex offenders' whereabouts with the new DOC sex offender registry, and make the crime of human trafficking of a minor a felony.

Stevenson votes against new fireworks legislation

I voted **AGAINST** the bill that will now allow Indiana residents to launch previously-banned fireworks on their own property. The final version of this bill became an unreasonable piece of legislation that has the potential to harm our communities and neighbors.

The bill changes the classification of certain types of fireworks and authorizes the discharge of fireworks on personal property or in specially approved fireworks discharge areas. It also implements a five percent public safety fee for the retail sale of fireworks.

I could not support the final version of this legislation for a number of reasons. It removed all local control, something that I thought was vital in enforcing and addressing any fireworks issues. It will allow the discharge of fireworks 365 days a year until at least 11 p.m. every evening and beginning again at 9 a.m. the next morning with no regard for our family neighborhoods. In short, there is little an entire neighborhood can do if one solitary individual chooses to discharge these previously-banned fireworks well into the evening and then again the following morning on a regular basis.

I appreciate your comments on this issue, and I heard your concerns in voting against the proposal. I will continue to keep you informed as this issue evolves.